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Communication through logos

Study of the communicational means of organizational logos

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COMMUNICATION THROUGH LOGOS – STUDY OF THE COMMUNICATIONAL MEANS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LOGOS

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to examine the communicational aspects of organizational logos. Two research questions were created for the study: What visual elements of corporate visual identity and logo communicate the identity of the organization? How well does a logo communicate the identity of the organization that it represents?

Summary

The study was built on a visual research method of semiotics - the meaning of colours and of forms. Two main concepts related to organizational logos were introduced in the literature review: corporate identity and corporate visual identity (CVI). The literature further reviewed the five main elements of CVI: logo, colour, typography, name and slogan. The logos for the research were selected from various sources based on the three different types of logos (Pohjola 2003) : symbolic/iconic logos, logotype and combined mark. In addition, a focus group of six people was formed to gather opinions about the selected logos.

Conclusion

The findings of the study show that visual elements, especially corporate logos, do communicate an organization's identity to its stakeholders. The extent to which and how well the logo communicates the identity depends on the type of logo. This study indicated that the logos which best communicate the desired identity of an organization are word logo and iconic logos.

Keywords

Corporate identity, corporate visual identity, corporate reputation, visual communication, corporate logo, semiotics

VIESTINTÄÄ LOGOILLA- TUTKIMUS YRITYSTUNNUSTEN VIESTINNÄLLISISTÄ KEINOISTA

Tutkimuksen tavoitteet

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli tarkastella organisaatioiden yritystunnusten viestinnällisiä ominaisuuksia. Tutkimus rakentui kahdesta tutkimuskysymyksestä: Mitkä yrityksen visuaalisen identiteetin ja yritystunnuksen elementit viestivät yrityksen identiteetistä? Kuinka hyvin yritystunnus viestii edustamaansa organisaation identiteettiä?

Lähdeaineisto ja tutkimusmenetelmät

Tutkimus pohjautui visualisen viestinnän metodeihin: semiotiikkaan, värien merkitykseen ja muotojen merkitykseen. Teoriaosuudessa esiteltiin kaksi yritystunnuksiin liittyvää käsitettä: yritysidentiteetti ja visuaalinen yritysidentiteetti sekä visuaalisen yritysidentiteetin viisi pääelementtiä: yritystunnus, väri, typografia, nimi ja slogan. Tutkimuksen yritystunnukset kerättiin eri lähteistä niin, että ne edustivat kolmea yritystunnustyyppiä (Pohjola 2003): symboli-/ikonitunnus, nimitunnus ja yhdistelmä-tunnus. Tämän lisäksi muodostettiin kuuden hengen fokusryhmä, jonka kertoi mielipiteensä valituista tunnuksista.

Tutkimuksen tulokset

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittivat että visuaaliset elementit, erityisesti yritystunnus, viestivät organisaation identiteetistä sen sidosryhmille. Se, kuinka hyvin tunnukset viestivät identiteetistä, riippuu tunnustyyppistä. Tämä tutkimus osoitti, että nimitunnus ja symbolitunnus viestivät parhaiten haluttua identiteettiä.

Avainsanat

Yritysidentiteetti, visuaalinen yritysidentiteetti, yritysmaaine, visuaalinen viestintä, yritystunnus, logo, semiotiikka

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1 INTRODUCTION

In today's visual world we are increasingly affected by visual elements during our lives. Through these different visual communicational elements various senders seek to influence our daily decisions and actions. In recent years, there has been a growing interest also in the visual side of corporate communication in the business settings (eg. van den Bosch et al, 2006; Melewar & Karaosmangolu; 2006, Szukala, 2001).

The visual communication elements in the corporate settings are generally linked with the term of corporate identity and corporate visual identity, which play a significant role in how corporations present themselves to the public audience. According to van den Bosch et al (2006) the different elements of corporate visual identity are: logo, name of the corporation, colours, typography and slogan. Corporations do not always use all of these elements to communicate their identity to stakeholders, but select the ones that best work in their business setting and in the communication medias they use.

Szukala (2001) point out convincing reasons why organizations should standardize their corporate visual identity in their communication; organizations which have standardized their use of corporate visual identity have reported of

- Significant gains in familiarity among target audiences
- Evidence of greater differentiation from key competitors
- Reduced marketing and communications costs
- Streamlined management processes, particularly in areas to do with tactical and operational planning
- Improved recruitment and retention rates

Szukala (2001) continues that the strongest evidence of interest towards corporate visual identity can be seen in the fact that not only large corporations but also growing number of public sector and not-for-profit organizations have changed their traditional styling for bright, new corporate visual identity systems.

Van den Bosch et al. (2005) recognize that logo describes the identity of an organization; it symbolizes their purpose, but it must be ensured that this is communicated consistent manner, as it connects the organization to the market. They continue that corporate logo can clarify organizations features and qualities and can be associated with its roots. Still Van den Bosch et al. (2005) feel that the uniqueness of logo demands special creativity, which must support the organization's strategy.

Corporate communication is the vital component that connects corporate identity with the corporate image and reputation. Corporate logo and other visual means of corporate visual identities are the visual identifications, which shape the expectations of the stakeholders' and create the basis for corporate image and reputation. According to Pohjola (2006p.146-151) corporate visual identity must meet the four following demands:

Strategic demands:

Visual identity must endure in time, as it is the communicational mean that includes the corporate mission and vision. Often this means when new identity is revealed, that there are some strategic changes in the corporation behind it. Visual identify must also be coherent with the other corporate communication and marketing communication.

Demands of visual form:

The corporation must be recognized in all situations. Corporate logos must thus have a strong symbolic meaning and it should speak to people. Sometimes logos that seem weak in visual communication have a strong symbolic value. This is due to the strong communication that has raised the goodwill-value of the logo to the awareness of the stakeholders. Visual identity must possess strong personality and be authentic. This set the corporation apart from it rivals.

Technical restrictions:

The different parts of visual identity must function well in different surfaces, sizes and places. This restriction is good to take into consideration, when actually designing a new identity.

Functional demands

All the visual parts of the identity must fit and function in all needed surfaces and objects. This means that when creating a visual image for all of the functional spaces from a pen to a truck must be taken into consideration.

Most of the research done in the field of Corporate Visual Identity is concentrated on the strategic management of the intangible parts of the corporate identity (See van den Bosch et al, 2006 and Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006). The concept of corporate identity today does not convey only visual elements, as it has been previously suggested (Melewar and Karaosmanoglu, 2006), but its research also involves the intangible parts of the identity, such as the culture of the organization.

Henderson and Cote (1996a and 1996b), are researchers that have concentrated in their research to the corporate logo and its evaluation and recognition. Through exploratory factor analysis, they have studied for example four basic design dimensions that evoked positive evaluations in logos. These characteristics are:

- Elaborateness (complex, active, deep)
- Associability (codable, familiar)
- Symmetry
- Naturalness (representative, round, organic)

In other words, to achieve more positive consumer evaluation, designers should design logos that evoke strong associations, are more elaborate, possess some sort of symmetry, and are more natural (Henderson & Cote, 1996a).

In their study of recognition of corporate logos Henderson and Cote (1996b) came to conclusion, that from a strategic standpoint, true recognition of a logo is of great value to a company. False recognition may also be strategically important; logos that evoke a sense of familiarity will also be easily "recognized," even with limited exposure. Thus,

if a logo creates a sense of recognition, whether true or false, it will contribute to a sense of knowing the advertised company.

The research done by Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006) implies that a majority of the managers consider specific visual elements a crucial part in the communication of the corporation's identity.

Pohjola (2006, p.147) notes that The most simple way to evaluate corporate visual identity is to analyse if the visual identity meets the wanted image. He listed ten points that can be taken into consideration when evaluating visual identity:

1. Usefulness
2. Quality: the quality of the product seen by the receivers
3. Ease to use
4. Simplicity
5. Clearness
6. Order: all of the images have a logical place
7. Natural
8. Aesthetic: this is met when all details are carefully thought of
9. Innovation
10. Truthfulness

Logos are an intriguing part of corporate communications where visual signs are used as means of communication. As the concept of CVI, in which logo plays a leading role, includes such many elements not many researchers have focused purely on corporate logos. When there has been a research conducted about corporate logos, the researchers have focused on the efficiency and reconcilability of the logos (see example Henderson & Cote, 1996). These two matters are extremely important when examined how well the corporate logo succeeds to communicate its message to the public audience. But before looking into how efficient the communication is, should it first be checked out that the message that is being sent is correct and according to the corporate identity?

This indicates that there is little research done in evaluating the success of logos to communicate what they should communicate, the identity of organizations. Due to this study concentrates on the communicational aim of logos: do they communicate the organizational identity.

Next chapter defines the aim of the research and introduces the research questions.

1.1 Objective of the study

This section defines the two research questions that are used in this study to examine the communicative aspects of corporate logos. After the questions, an explanation is given about how the research questions will be investigated in the study.

- 1) What visual elements of CVI and logo communicate the identity of the organization?
- 2) How well logo communicates the identity of the organization it represents?

The objective of the first research question is to examine the different elements of corporate visual identity and logo, which communicate the identity of the corporation it represents. Five different elements in CVI: logo, colour, typography, name and slogan are introduced in the chapter 2. The visual communicational elements of logos: form and colour are explained in chapters 2 and 3.

The second question concentrates on the communicational means of logos and examines how well the forms and colours communicate the identity of organization. This is examined through an analysis of the meaning of colours and basic forms and focus group discussion.

1.2 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five parts. The first chapter has introduced the background of corporate visual identity research and discussed the aim of the study.

Chapter 2 explains the concepts of corporate identity and corporate visual identity and their meaning in the business communication. The difference between three concepts: corporate identity, corporate image and corporate reputation is discussed in this chapter. The chapter also outlines and further explains the five main elements of the corporate visual identity that are used in this study.

Chapter 3 describes the data and methods used in the study. The Chapter indicates the data collection methods, introduces the collected data and explains the use of semiotics in this study. Further the chapter explains the communicational means of basic forms and colours.

Chapter 4 analyses six logos selected for this study and indicates the opinions of the focus group members. Chapter 5 gives the summary of the study and indicates the main results of the research and outlines possibilities for further study.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Corporate identity is present in all transactions and contact points the corporation has with its stakeholders. Big corporations can carry out thousands transactions every day: they buy, sell, hire, manufacture and advertise through the web and other media. In most of these transactions, corporate visual identity can be the only clue stakeholders get from the company they are in contact with. The most well known part of the visual identity is the corporate logo that visually represents and identifies the corporation in all of its communication.

This chapter introduces first the concept of corporate visual identity and explains how it differentiates from corporate image and corporate reputation. After that the concept of corporate visual identity and its five main elements are examined more thoroughly.

The main focus in this chapter is the corporate logo and how it is relevant in the concepts of corporate identity and corporate visual identity.

2.1 Corporate identity

This section introduces the concept of corporate identity, its difference to two other related concepts: corporate image and corporate reputation and the three types of corporate identities.

Corporate identity communicates what the corporation is: how it conducts its business and what is its mission and vision. According to Ambroise and Harris (2006, p.133), Corporate identity is "The behavioral characteristics of a company, which define what qualities are synonymous with its level of service, its innovative nature or its approach to doing business." Olins (2002) states that corporate identity is in fact how the organization defines its strategy, structure and vision. Pohja (2003, p.20) views corporate identity as its sense of self. This includes the basic values and presumptions, corporate culture, definition of the goals, business idea, vision, strategies and the

attitude towards marketing and competition. It also holds on to different stories and myths about the corporation.

So to say, corporate identity is built up of different elements and it depends on the definition, which of the elements is taken into consideration. Basically all the definitions indicate the same: corporate identity is how the corporation sees itself, what it does and how it does it.

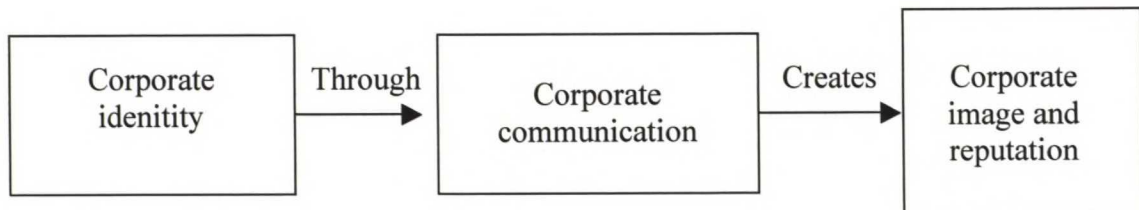
There are also two other concepts that are closely related to corporate identity, and thus often confused with it. These two concepts are of corporate image and reputation. To avoid this confusion and to highlight the importance of corporate identity, the difference of these three concepts and their relation to each other is clarified.

According to Dowling (2001 p.18-19) the images of different objects such as countries, industries, companies and brands are inside the heads of people. These images are not fixed attributes and can easily change depending on people's own experiences. That is the reason why companies do not have just a single image but a set of different images that different people hold in their minds. Hence, corporate image is a comprised set of believes and feelings a person has towards an organization.

So to say, corporate identity is what the organization thinks it is and corporate image is what stakeholders think the corporation is like. Although different, there is a link between these two concepts. Dowling (2001, p.20) states that corporate identity builds up on corporate identity symbols (i.e. logo) in order to help stakeholders to recall their image of the company. Dowling also argues that some corporate identity symbols may even enhance corporations' image.

Corporate reputation again represents the value judgment that people make about the corporation based on their experience of the corporation, stories they have heard and believes they have of the corporation (Aula & Heinonen, 2002, p.35). Aula and Heinonen continue that corporate image can change quickly through specific actions and well-conceived communication programs; whereas corporate reputation evolves

over time as a result of consistent performance and it can be reinforced through corporate communication.



Ind (1992, p. 27) states that corporate communication is the process that translates corporate identity into corporate image. The identity needs to be communicated to stakeholders and the role of design within this is to visually signify what the corporation stands for.

Ambroise and Harris (2006, p.133) state that corporate identity can be divided into three different types: monolithic, endorsed and branded identity. These three types of identity each indicate how corporations have arranged their different business functions and categories and thus tell how the companies see themselves. Is the corporation just a multitasking company or does it give own identities to its different operational units. Olins (2002) states that these three identity categories are not mutually exclusive, and none is necessarily superior to any of the others as each is appropriate in specific circumstances. The type of identity a corporation has selected is often also communicated through a corporate logo. The three different types of identities are more thoroughly explained next and examples of companies and their logos are given to better explain these identity types.

First, in *monolithic identity* all companies or products of the same corporation carry the same brand name, and only one name and visual identification is used throughout all of its interactions. Because everything that the corporation does has the same name, style

and character, each company or product supports the “mother identity” (Olins 2002). An example of a monolithic identity is presented in Figure 1, which shows the logo of Rautaruukki Corporation. Rautaruukki operates with its marketing name Ruukki and has organized all its operations under one corporate identity and corporate logo.



Figure 1. An example of monolithic corporate identity (www.ruukki.com)

Second, *endorsed identity* means that separate companies or brands are endorsed by the parent company to show its lineage (Ambroise and Harris, 2006). Under an endorsed identity strategy, corporation endorses its subsidiary companies with the corporate name and sometimes also visual style and logo (Olins 2002). Figure 2 gives an example how Metso corporation uses endorsed identity to communicate its three different business fields: Metso paper, Metso minerals and Metso automation.



Figure 2. An example of endorsed corporate identity (<http://www.metso.com/>)

The third type, *branded identity*, demonstrated in Figure 3, is a fully-branded product or company identity in its own right, without any reference to the parent company (Ambroise and Harris, 2006). Some companies, especially those in consumer products,

separate their corporate identity from the identities of the brands they own. For example Unilever has its own corporate logo and identity but all the different brands it manufactures have their own identities and logos. Figure 3 shows Unilever's corporate logo and under it examples of the different product brand logos that the company markets (Omo, Dove, Magnum, Knorr and Becel). According to Olins (2002), in branded identity the final customer identifies with the brand and other audiences the corporation. These brands have names, reputations, life cycles, and personalities of their own, and they may even compete with other brands from the same company.



Figure 3. Example of endorsed corporate identity (www.unilever.fi)

Companies invest huge sums in corporate identity and its symbols. Because of that Dowling (2001, p.161) points out that there is a need to set straight the ability of these symbols to impact on the performance. He argues that identity change has a significant positive effect only on those companies that have undergone a major change as a whole. This positive effect might show the importance of the reflection of the true identity of the company in the logo: if only the logo is renewed without any change in the organization it doesn't reflect the true nature of the company any longer.

Huovila (2006, p.14-16) states that an organization must know itself well in order to define what it is and what its goals are. By defining its goals the corporation states its identity. Without this it is impossible for the corporation to communicate its identity to its stakeholders. To define its corporate identity, the corporation should prepare to answer three questions about itself (Huovila, 2006 p.15-16):

1) What are we now?

This question forces the corporation to define its current core business, business situation and position in the market place. The best descriptive answer is when adjectives such as effective, leader of the market and reliable are used.

2) What have we been before?

With this question, history of the corporation becomes an explanatory factor to the current situation and helps in definition of the corporate identity. The history of the organization gives initials for thinking of the future as well.

3) What do we want to be in five years?

The future goals should be linked to the corporate identity.

As pointed out corporate identity is what the organization is about, what its values are, and what kind of business it does and what goals it has for the future. It must know itself before communicating it to its stakeholders.

This section introduced the concept of corporate identity and its three different types, which is the basis when doing research on corporate logos. Two other concepts: image and reputation were also shortly explained to avoid confusion with corporate identity. Logos, which is the main focus of this study communicate the corporate identity and thus the concept of corporate identity was introduced to create basis for the research.

All these three concepts discussed in this section: corporate identity, corporate image and corporate reputation are intangible. In order to make corporate identity tangible and

visible to the stakeholder corporate visual identity is needed in the communication process. Next section introduces then the concept of corporate visual identity.

2.2 Corporate visual identity

Corporate visual identity is the tangible part of not so tangible concept of corporate identity. Van den Bosch et al (2006b) state that it has a significant role in presenting the corporation to its internal and external stakeholders. It is also one of the tools that help the corporation to influence its image. This section presents the concept of Corporate Visual Identity (CVI), its use in corporate communications and the five elements it consists of.

Van den Bosch et al. (2005) state that CVI is a concept that comprises all the symbols and graphical elements that express the essence of a corporation. Pohja (2003, p.20) argues that CVI is not only the graphical elements of the identity but that it is based upon all strategic choices that the corporation has made to be able to turn its identity to its image.

The five main elements of the CVI are corporate name, logo and/or symbol, colour, typography and slogan (van den Bosch et al 2006a, van den Bosch et al 2006 b, Melewar et al 2006, Baker and Balmer 1997...). These five elements are more closely explained in the sections 2.2.1 to 2.2.4. In addition to the five main elements of CVI there are also other visual means to convey the corporate identity. Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006) argue that a CVI can also be conveyed through the company's products, vehicles, location and architecture of the buildings. Through these and the five main elements mentioned, CVI acts as glue that holds the different communicational elements of corporate communication together and adds to the recognition of its identity (Huovila 2006, p.18).

However, not all corporations have all of the CVI elements to represent their visual identity; some of them only have a name and a slogan and others rely on purely the name of the corporation. This is a matter of decision, and when making the decision on what elements to use, corporations must consider by which visual means the message of corporate identity is communicated best.

In general terms, CVI expresses tangibly and visually the values and ambitions of an organisation, its business, and its characteristics and sets it apart from other companies. Huovila (2006, p.15) argues that CVI is the visual clue that reveals the organizations current corporate situation, its history and future. Thus, as well as the corporate identity, the CVI must also be based on the reality of the corporation; it cannot give false messages or present the corporation in any other what than it is. Otherwise the identity is blurry and incredible. The visual identity communicates its message often with abstract means but its meaning is developed through the corporations' other communication and actions. Bad publicity and experiences affect the interpretation of the visual identity as well (Pohja, 2003 , p.20).

The primary role of the CVI elements is to create awareness among stakeholders, trigger stakeholders' recognition of the company and activate an already stored image of the corporation in their minds (Dowling, 2001, p.167). All organizations have a visual identity; even though they never have had it designed or integrated the different elements of CVI coherently (Dowling, 2001, p.180). With visual means corporations try to support and assure that the wanted corporate communication is understood and received by the stakeholders. (Huovila, 2006, p.55)

At its best CVI is professionally developed with mutual cohesion forms and signs that convey the visual language of an organization and of which the organization becomes known for. If this is done well, the visual language the organization lets itself be seen, gives boost to the potential identification. And tells what CVI is all about: about existence, being there. (Brandt & van Westering 2003 p.32)

Brandt and van Westering (2003 p.32-33) point out three things that CVI does for an organization.

1) Presents the corporation.

Through developing a visual language and letting this be heard, and organization can say that it exist as well as who it is.

2) Creates consistency in variation

An organization is made systematically recognisable by means of its own signs, forms and colours. The purpose is to distinguish itself and secure place in people's minds.

3) Conveys the totality of qualities that should match an organization, thereby providing it with visual identity.

Brandt and van Westering continue that if the language and forms are well chosen, then the CVI is automatically distinctive and communicative, and able to express the identity of an organization.

When designing CVI the core idea of the corporate identity must be well thought of, as it is the created message of corporate identity. When visualizing the core identity, it must be thought how it's done by visual means. The visual message finds its recipient best when it is clear and simple and is used in several ways throughout the corporate communication (Huovila, 2006, p.56). Bosch et al (2006a) calls these different communicational ways as carriers. Carriers can be for example stationery, brochures and leaflets, advertisements, web pages and corporate clothing.

According to Dowling (2001, p.181), it is extremely difficult to design an identity that breaks through the disorder and evokes corporate traits that are immediately valued by stakeholders. Sometimes there are literal meanings and inferential beliefs, which are automatically attached or engineered to CVI symbols. But as Dowling (2001, p.182)

argues, corporate identities seem to work when they are sold well both internally and externally.

Dowling (2001, p.167-170) points out three different incidents when the CVI symbols do not work. The first occurs when the identity is not noticed at all. This can be improved using salience and vividness in the symbols. Salience occurs when person's attention is directed to one part of their environment rather than to other parts. This happens when the CVI is novel, extreme, colourful or incorporating it to a distinctive context. This has become harder in today's highly visual surroundings, where there are lots of different messages fighting for peoples' attention. Vividness, on the another hand, is the ability to attract and hold a person's attention and excite his/her imagination. This means that the object is emotionally interesting, concrete and imagery provoking and proximate in a sensory, temporal or spatial way.

The second incident occurs when CVI lacks the ability to influence persons beliefs and/or feelings about the company. This can happen when the name of the corporation does not automatically create a clear set of meanings about the company to receivers mind. This is usually avoided by explaining the logo and name to stakeholders when introducing a new CVI. This way corporation ensures that people understand the relationship between the corporate name/logo and the company.

Usually this kind of explanation of the CVI symbols is done when a new corporate logo is introduced. The explanation may be in the launch event or in a customer magazine. For example, Finavia (former Finnish Civil Aviation Administration) had an article written about the design process of its new CVI and the "hidden" meanings of its logo in its customer magazine *Kiitotie*. The new Finavia logo is exhibited in the Figure X. Timo Keinänen (2006, p. 9), the designer of Finavias new CVI describes the different meanings behind the logo:

“In the new company logo the form for the letter F is inspired by the shape of the Helsinki-Vantaa airport terminal. The light blue piece next to the “terminal” mirrors the airline, passengers or the airplane on the gate. These are all things that create the entity that Finavia serves. The air controllers over their desks is another thing that might be seen from the logo or radar”



Figure 4. The logo of Finavia (www.finavia.fi)

The third of CVI's possible failure points is the ability of the CVI symbols to evoke wanted image of the organization into the mind of the viewer. Dowling (2001, p.169-170) reminds that when designing corporate identity symbols, one must be aware what kind of associated beliefs and feeling people automatically attribute to names, colours, pictures and shapes.

This section explained the concept of corporate visual identity, the tangible elements of corporate identity which play a significant role in this study. As mentioned in the beginning of this section, CVI consists of five main elements: Logo, Colour, Typeface, Name and Slogan. In the following four sections each of these five elements are examined more thoroughly and explained how they are defined and what part do they play in CVI.

2.2.1 Logo

This chapter explains the meaning of logo, the different types of logos and how corporations and organizations use them in their communication.

According to Ambrose and Harris (2006, p.155), logo is "A graphic symbol that is designed to represent the character of a company, product or service or other entity." So to say, it is the visual icon for the organization, which represents with one image the whole organization and its business objectives.

In addition to serving as a visual icon for a company name or brand name, logos are designed to enhance consumers' evaluations of the company (Henderson & Cote 1996a). Or as Dowling (2001, p.175) puts it: logo is the badge of corporate identification. Thus logos are highly visible. Olins (2002) argue that its prime purpose is to present the idea of the corporation with impact, brevity and immediacy and it often becomes the focal point from which the whole identity is subsequently judged. The CVI is created usually around the corporate logo, which is typically used in all actions of the corporation.

Pohjola (2006, p.132) has divided logos into three basic types based on what illustrative and visual means are used to represent the company: *Iconic/symbolic, logotype and combination marks*.

1) *Iconic/Symbolic*

Icons and symbols are forceful but simple images that represent particular company or organization. They use imagery that conveys a literal or abstract representation of the organization. Symbols are less direct than straight text, leaving room for broader interpretation of what the organization represents. Figure 5 shows examples of Iconic logos.



Figure 5. Examples of iconic/symbolic logos: logos of WWF, Apple, Volkswagen and Nike

2) *Logotype/Wordmark*

A logotype, known in the design industry as a "word mark", incorporates the company name into a uniquely styled type font treatment. Type fonts come in thousands of possible variations, shapes, sizes, and styles, each conveying a slightly different impression. Type font treatments can also include hand-drawn letters, characters or symbols that have been rendered in such a way as to intrigue the eye and capture the interest. Figure 6 shows examples of logotype logos.



Figure 6. Examples of logotypes: logos of Ruukki, Neste Oil and Coca Cola.

3) *Combination Marks*

Combination marks are graphics with both text and a symbol that signifies the corporate identity. Short text can complement an icon or symbol, providing supplemental clarity to what the company is all about.

As Figure 7 shows, there are integrated and stand alone combination marks. For example, Valio's logo has the text with the graphic integrated, whereas Finavia have the icon separate from the text.



Figure 7. Examples of combination marks: logos of Finavia, Valio, Metso and Nestlé

Unlike Apple logo (See figure 5) that clearly picture the corporate name, many corporate logos can be accused of having intrinsic meanings only to their designers. Sometimes they look as if they have been designed to look like corporate logos rather than something that has an ability to enhance the company's communication (Dowling 2001, p.175). Olins (2002) suggests that these anonymous logos are "safe", since they are unlikely to upset stakeholders.

There are also companies that have created a story or a meaning to their logo. For example, Nestlé Corporation has created a symbolic meaning in its logo (See Figure 7). Nestlé is a nest in Swiss German dialect and its logo has a mother bird feeding its baby, which implies to Nestlé's business operations: cooking, childcare, pet care and wellness.

The purpose of the logo is visualize the identity of the corporation. Van den Bosch et al. (2006) and Baker and Balmer (1997) have distinguished four other functions that corporate logo has:

- 1) Provide an organization with visibility and recognition. It supports corporation's visibility by emphasizing the presence of the organization especially in buildings, vehicles and billboards.
- 2) Symbolize the corporation for its external stakeholders and in that way can contribute to its image and reputation, in good and bad.
- 3) Express the structure of the corporation to its external stakeholders, visualising the size of the corporation, its strength and its coherence as well as the relationships between divisions or units.
- 4) Create an internal function, where corporate logo relates to employees' identification with the corporation as a whole and with the department where they work.

This section introduced logo, its three types and its purposes. As the focus of this study is corporate logo, in way critical to understand why logos are used in corporate communication and for what purposes they have. Next section introduces the second element of CVI: colour and its use and meaning.

2.2.2 Colour

This section introduces the second CVI element, colour and its communicational means. It also explains how corporations use colour in their CVI communication.

Colours can communicate by different means, depending on how they are used with other elements. They also have psychological and symbolic meanings; these are for example national symbolic colours such blue and white are in Finland. Huovila (2006, p.45) notes that different colours are also linked to emotions and situations such as religious colours. Certain colours can cause predictable emotional and psychological effects. People also learn to respond to them in certain way; for example red signifies stop and danger in traffic signs.

Huovila (2006, p.45) notes that culture plays a significant role in the interpretation of the colours. Mantua (2007) for example has studied the role of colours in international business settings. This research concentrates on corporate identities in the western corporate settings, and thus the cultural differences in the meaning of colours is set aside and focus is only in how western cultures see colours.

According to Huovila (2006, p.44) colours can be divided into two different categories: cold and warm colours. Cold colours are considered to be those colours around blue and green, and warm ones those around orange. Both categories have their own characters. Cold colours are considered being in distance from the perceiver and warm colours in other hand, are thought to be closer to the viewer. Researchers have also documented generalizations on how colour effect on people (Dowling, 2001, p.177).

Huovila (2006, p.45) states, that psychologically colours communicate as follows:

| | |
|--------|--------------------|
| White: | Cold, Clean, empty |
| Green: | Strong, enduring |

| | |
|---------|---------------------------------|
| Blue: | Calm, satisfied, orderliness |
| Yellow: | Future, happiness, ambition |
| Grey: | Neutral but independent |
| Purple: | Mystical, joyful, enchanting |
| Red: | Action, competition, excitement |
| Orange: | Security, sociality, comfort |
| Black: | Destiny, inflexible, modern |

According to Huovila (2006, p.46), colours have also symbolic meanings

| | |
|---------|---|
| White: | cleanness, innocence, marriage, honour |
| Green: | nature, balance, health, envy |
| Blue: | coolness, faith, loyalty, pride, heaven |
| Yellow: | betrayal, envious, intelligence |
| Grey: | anonymity, togetherness, honourable |
| Purple: | humble, royal |
| Red: | revolution, bravery, love, fertility |
| Orange: | danger, strength, happiness |
| Black: | death, high-tech, authority, power |

Although some colours can be given meanings as previously shown, visual messages, including colour, depend highly in what kind of connection it is used. (Huovila,2006, p.46)

Colours work in CVI in many levels. For one, the corporate colour is used in the corporate logo and in all CVI elements used. Pohjola (2006, p.135) gives example of Finnish companies where corporate colour plays significant role alongside the logo in the CVI. These companies are Posti (Finnish post) and Huoneistokeskus (a chain of real estate agents) that use their corporate colored vans and purchase points as means of communicating their CVI. Other such applications are, for example, web pages, stationery and corporate headquarters.

Corporations usually pick a couple of colours to represent the corporation: one to two main colours and a couple of secondary colours that are used side by side with the main colours. For example Neste Oil has one main corporate colour (marine blue) that is used in the logotype and three other secondary colours: light green, light blue and white, which are used to freshen the CVI and add depth to the corporate colour palette (Neste Oil Graphical Guideline). Neste Oil's all corporate colours are visible for example in the Neste Oil petrol stations that is pictured in the figure 8.



Figure 8. Neste Oil petrol station (Neste Oil)

The use of certain corporate colours is relevant as according to Dowling (2001, p. 177) people are thought to notice colours more readily than form and shape, and colours also hold their attention longer.

This section explained the use of colour in the CVI and the different meanings of colours. These meanings are used later in the chapter 4 where the logos selected for this study are analysed more closely. Next section introduces third CVI element: typeface.

2.2.3 Typography

This section shortly explains what typography and typeface are and how they are used in CVI. Typeface is the specific text style that is used throughout the CVI, also in the corporate logo.

The aim of the typography is to make the message suitable for its target audience: to be functional, to communicate, to transmit. Typeface is, according to Abrose and Harris (2002, p.261), a group of characters, numbers, symbols and punctuation, which have the same distinct style. A particular design of a type, so to say. A font on the other hand is a physical means of typeface production, whether the description of the typeface in computer code, or from lithographic film, metal or wood. The terms 'font' and 'typeface' are often mixed, but the easy way to remember them correctly is to think of font as a cookie cutter and the typeface as the cookie that is produced (Abrose and Harris (2002, p.261) .

To create a coherent appearance in the CVI a specific typography is specially designed or selected for the corporation. Typography narrowly looks means morphology of letters, for example how the letter “a” can have different detailed arches in order to be beautiful and readable. (Huovila, 2006, p.19) Figure 9 shows the anatomy of letters and the definitions that are used in typography.



Figure 9. Letter anatomy (www.soslogodesign.com/)

For example, tall narrow letter with serif seem elegant; rounded full letters without serif seem friendly. Also a typeface that seems handwritten will convey a people orientation and upper case letters convey authority. (Huovila, 2006, p.178) Script fonts imply a sense of formality and refinement. Thick fonts proclaim strength and power, whereas slanted type fonts impart a sense of motion or movement. (Pohjola 2006) Figure 10 shows examples of letter A written in sans serif, serif, fantasy and scrip letters.

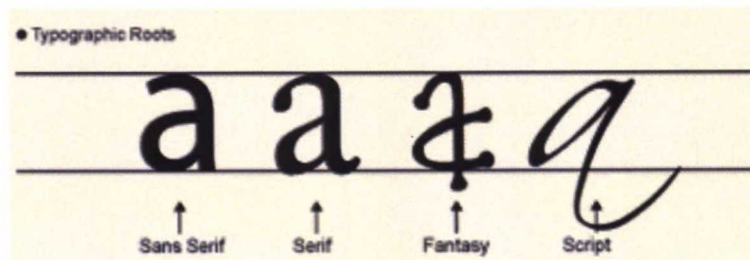


Figure 10. Typographic roots (www.soslogodesign.com/)

As already mentioned before, different typographies have own attributes through which they communicate with the reader. Some of the attributes are connected with the form of the letter type and what does these forms communicate to the receiver. Some of the attributes are connected to tradition, situations where readers have learned to see certain letter types. (Huovila, 2006. p.88)

There are hundreds of different typographical faces and in addition to the different typographies each of them can vary on size and form. Although the huge amount of different typefaces, relatively few of them are suitable for easy communication and recognition (Huovila, 2006, p.178) For some, typefaces may seem hard to recognize from each other, but actually there are some typefaces that transfer subtle meanings about a company.

Huovila (2006, p.88) argues that the most important element of typography is the chosen typeface and the form it represents. He continues that when choosing a typeface for a CVI, one must consider what things different fonts symbolize and how readable the font is in different sizes and in different surfaces.

Typeface and its readability are important factors when evaluating the communication of logos. The different aspects of typography are also taken into consideration when the logos are analysed later in the chapter 4. Next section presents the two last elements of CVI: name and slogan.

2.2.4 Name and Slogan

This section introduces the last of CVI's main elements: name and slogan and explains their relevance to corporate identity communication.

From the five main elements of CVI, the corporate name has an important part of the corporate symbols according to Dowling (2001, p.170-172). He continues that this is because the name tends to describe the organization verbally and often the name is the first meaningful point of contact between the organization and its audience. Corporate names also denote and connote meanings.

Originally the companies were named after their founders so that the stakeholders would know that there are important persons behind the company and that the company is trustworthy (Dowling 2001, p.170). Many of the old respected Finnish companies carry the name of the founder family: Paulig, Fazer, Ingman, just to name a few.

According to Dowling (2001, p.172) other types for naming the organizations and corporations are,

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Location: | Outokumpu, Saks Fifth Avenue |
| Generic product: | Kone |
| Animal, etc: | Shell, Apple, Jaguar |
| Descriptive: | Holiday Inn, Sampo |
| Abbreviated: | PanAm |
| Initials: | IBM, HSE |
| Abstract: | Kodak, Xerox |
| Analogy: | Nike |
| Dynamic: | Whirlpool, Speedo |
| Coined: | Coca-cola (=coca-leaf and cola nut) |

Usually corporate name is integrated with the corporate logo, and thus name plays a role in this research as well. Although the main focus of this study is the meanings of forms and colours of logos, people often pay attention to the company name and the possible association they get from the name.

Slogans are used in CVI for various purposes, asking for action (Mitsubishi – please consider) or makes a promise (Lexus- without compromise), provides a reason to buy (BMW- the ultimate driving machine). Sometimes slogans explain the name of the corporation (Allison- Hotels and resorts) and thus expose the weakness of the corporate name. Slogans can also be used a way to help to sell the company's vision to all stakeholders and act this way as a meaningful device to the customers. (Dowling, 2001, p179) Slogans are the fifth element of CVI. Slogans are not considered important in this study as they are written communication and the focus of this research is in visual communication.

This chapter described previous studies and literature of the main concepts in this study: corporate identity and corporate visual identity. It also explained the reasons why these concepts are relevant for this study and gave examples of the three elements that are used as a base when analysing the communication of selected logos. Next chapter introduces research method and data used in this study

3 RESEARCH DATA AND METHODS

This chapter introduces the specific methods and data used in this research. First, the data collection methodology is reviewed and the selected logos and the organizations they represent are introduced. Second, the methods for analysing data are introduced and finally validity and reliability issues of the study are discussed.

3.1 Selected six logos and companies they present

This section explains the used selection method of logos for this study and introduces the six selected logos. It also introduces the organizations and corporations behind the logos the way they are introduced on their official web pages.

The logos of this research were selected based on the three different types of logos (according to Pohjola 2003) presented in the chapter 2. These types were symbolic/iconic logos, logotype and combined mark. The aim was to select two international company logos of each type.

The logos for the research were selected randomly from various sources: in the Internet from the pages of an European graphic design award, from a logo book and from my daily routines in the design agency where I currently work. The aim was to collect good selection of logos from international settings and wide representation of different types of logos. Also the selected logos would not be something that the focus group members would run into daily. This debarred the fact that the logos would be familiar to the focus group member and so the results of the members' opinions would be affected with previous experiences and opinions of the company.

The first two logos represent type of logos where the logo consists only of the name of the company, and thus represent the logotype logos. These types of logos rely mainly on

colours and the letter type of the logo. Figure 11 and 12 show the two logotype logos selected for this study.



Figure 11. Logo of HKScan (<http://yritys.hk-ruokatalo.fi/>)



Figure 12. Logo of Heijmans (www.heijmans.nl)

The third and fourth logos are rewarded as the best logos in Europe by a high-profile graphic design award Eulda. Eulda is shortening from the words the European Logo Design Annual, which rewards the best logos and trademarks designed throughout the Europe. Eulda promotes excellence in visual communication: through a yearly competition it provides real recognition to the people who invest their passion in the field of visual communication and acts as a benchmark for the high quality of work being produced throughout the world. The competition reflects the actual process that turns any logo idea into a successful logo: the designers decide what to present to the

clients, the clients decide what to present to the public, but in the end it is always the public that decides if a brand is successful. (Eulda, 2007).

The third presented logo is the logo of a Consumer Society and Citizen Network (CSCN) and it was rewarded as the best European logo in Eulda 2007. Figure 12 shows the logo of CSCN.



Figure 12. Logo of Consumer Society and Citizen Network (www.eulda.com)

The fourth logo, logo of Sociedade de Desenvolvimento do Norte da Madeira, won the same prize a year before, in 2006. Figure 13 exhibits the logo of Sociedade de Desenvolvimento do Norte da Madeira.

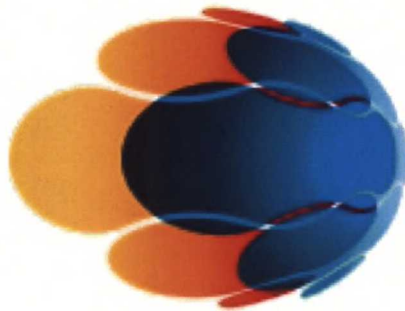


Figure 13. logo of Sociedade de Desenvolvimento do Norte da Madeira (www.eulda.com)

Both Eulda winners also represent symbolic logos that mostly relay on symbolism and do not have the name of the corporation in the logo. Picking two of Eulda winners makes it also interesting to see, how award-winning logos actually work outside the competition. These two logos also represent organizational logos compared to the other four logos that are corporate logos.

The two last logos represent logos that combine the name of the company and a symbol (combination marks). Both examples were hand selected from the book called Logo design that introduces the best and most creative logos in Europe (Wiedemann). The selection was made based on the type of the logo and the fact that that they actually represented European companies. After the logos where selected from the book, their web pages where visited to make sure that they are actual corporate logos operating in Europe. Figures 14 and 15 exhibit the two combination mark logos selected for this study.



Figure 14. logo of Ambion (www.ambion.de)



Figure 15. logo of Verek (www.verek.com)

To find out if the visual communication, specially logo and the identity of the corporation communicate same way, the web pages of each company were investigated to find out what the companies told about themselves and their vision and mission, in other words how they see themselves and what is their identity. The reason for selecting the web pages as the source of information of the companies was the openness and easy access of the information on the web.

As stated in the chapter 2, corporate identity is what the organization is about: what kind of business it does and what are its mission and vision. The identity of a company is communicated using different channels in order to create a positive image of the company to the stakeholders. One of these channels is the company web pages. The six organizations whose logos were selected for the study are presented based on the information the companies have on their web pages about their core business, vision and mission. The companies are introduced in the same order as their logos in the previous section. The addresses of their official web pages are also indicated right after the name of the company.

HKScan

(<http://yritys.hk-ruokatalo.fi>)

HKScan is one of the leading food companies in Northern Europe. The company's home market consists of Finland, Sweden, the Baltic and Poland. HKScan produces, sells and markets pork, beef and poultry meat, processed meats and convenience foods to retail, industry and export customers. The company operates in nine countries and have approximately 10 000 employees.

A core business principle of HKScan is consumer and customer satisfaction, which calls for high quality products and service at every stage of the value chain. HKScan's aim is to deliver value through consumer and customer focused operations, strong brands and efficient production and innovative products.

Heijmans

(www.heijmans.nl)

Heijmans is the second largest listed property development, building, infrastructure and installation engineering company in the Netherlands. Outside the Netherlands, Heijmans operates in the United Kingdom, Belgium and Germany. At the end of 2006, the company employed approximately 9 200 employees.

The company focuses on all activities in the value chain, from consultancy and design to maintenance and management. In this way, Heijmans aims to make an important contribution to the way in which the living environment is structured. Heijmans positions itself as: innovative, transparent with respect to the company's stakeholders, versatile in its provision of product and services and engaged in its social environment. Heijmans is also modern and progressive, ambitious, proactive and actively looking for opportunities.

Consumer Society and Citizen Networks

(<http://www.undp.org.ua/cscn/eng/index.php>)

The Consumer Society and Citizen Networks project (CSCN) is a joint initiative of the European Union and United Nations Development Program started in 2006. Its goal is to increase civil society role in sound economic governance in Ukraine according to the European standards.

CSCN aims at promoting access of citizens to information on product safety, consumer rights protection, and to results of independent testing, as well as promoting wide public discussion of challenges facing the consumer society in Ukraine.

CSCN works in three interrelated spheres:

- (1) Knowledge transfer, spreading European practices of independent testing and product safety awareness;
- (2) Providing citizens with access to consumer / economic empowerment information;
- (3) Access to consumer education
- (4) Capacity building of the judiciary.

Sociedade de Desenvolvimento do Norte da Madeira

(www.grutasecentrodovulcanismo.com)

In 2002 the Regional Government of Madeira created the Sociedade de Desenvolvimento do Norte da Madeira, S. A., a “public limited company pursuing goals in the public interest and whose corporate object is the design, promotion, construction and management of projects, actions and ventures which contribute in integrated fashion to the economic, social, sporting and cultural development” of districts in the north of Madeira, an area which the Company has designated the “Green Gold Coast”.

In the pursuit of its objectives the Company was responsible for projects, which were so relevant that they changed the landscape of the north of the island including the Madeira Theme Park, the Caves and the São Vicente Volcano Centre.

The Volcanism Center is located next to the São Vicente Caves on the north coast of Madeira. It brings culture and knowledge together with leisure and entertainment. Serving as a center for bringing together knowledge, it seeks to disseminate technical and scientific information.

Verek

(www.verek.com)

Verek Ltd. supplies the highest quality software for the Mac OS X platform. They are committed to manufacture highly specialized but easy to use and intuitive applications for customers, who don't accept any compromises regarding functionality or design.

By combining the experience of Verek's engineers with a wide network of contacts to creative customers and partners, they are confident to know how to meet high expectations of Macintosh users. Verek states that its vision is to make the modern technologies available for the Mac community. They also believe that Macintosh computer is the most important platform for all creative assignments.

Ambion

(www.ambion.de)

Ambion is an engineering firm concentrated on light and illumination, sound and multimedia settings and provides advice in all matters concerning technical realization, such as structural calculations, electrical supply and safety regulations, both for special technical requirements such as TV productions, multimedia or conference and broadcasting technology. Ambion implements these technical parameters as an economically responsible service provider.

Ambion considers appropriateness of projects that is important: all aspects of an event are purposefully coordinated and networked from a single source and via one contact.

The most important thing at Ambion is people: is it what brings a company to life. We are not firmly wed with already solved problems. This is part of Ambion's philosophy and applies for each person involved, whether in production or planning.

Ambion's vision is that combination of creativity and experience with technical and human competence is what singles out Ambion in the events sector: It does not just install technology for a room; it builds atmospheres.

3.2. Research methods

This section discusses and justifies of research methods used in this study. In order to evaluate the communicational aspects of the selected corporate logos and find out if the logos really communicate the corporate identity, qualitative research: the most suitable way of collecting peoples opinions and view was selected. The concept of semiotic and its use in the research are explained.

This study focuses on visual communication and interpreting the messages corporate logos send. Thus the methods for analyzing the data are specifically those that used for these purposes.

3.2.1 Qualitative research

This section justifies the use of qualitative research in this study and introduces the one of qualitative method, focus group that as used in this research.

Qualitative analysis is used in this study to receive subjective response to visual forms and the reading of graphic material by viewers. Noble and Bestley (2005, p.188) note that it could be often done by the researcher herself, in form of critical self-reflection. They continue that reading of images and visual signs through semiotic analysis, which is used in the research, is a qualitative act in itself: the initial data gathered is based on human reaction to the visual forms and experiments presented.

Noble and Bestley (2005, p. 60-64) state that the best way of getting feedback to research questions in a study that involves graphic design is in through the use of focus groups or audience observation. According to them the use of focus group derives from scientific methods such as data gathering and a qualitative research. In focus group the information is obtained from the assembled group of six to 12 participants that are selected to be sufficiently diverse to generate conversation but similar enough to bring common discourse to the session (Prince and Davies 2001, p.1).

Qualitative research is only method to be used in these settings as the questions used in the focus group discussion cannot be strictly controlled and because reactions to visual messages are hard to translate into numbers, which quantitative research often uses. Noble and Bestley (2005) continue that people also have a tendency to score their reactions to the middle range, when having a numbered scale for answers.

In order to find out if the six corporate logos truly represent the wanted corporate identity they stand for and communicate the wanted attributes a focus group was formed.

Focus group

There were two reasons for having a group of people discussing instead of a questionnaire or a one to one interview: first, to make people talk about than write down their impressions of the logos. As logos are a way of communicating, I felt it was easier for the focus group members to be able to describe their impressions than write them down. Second, group discussion creates more vivid conversation and eases to express

own feelings compared to interview. And as one of things that logos try to accomplice is reactions and recognition.

Six members were selected to the focus group. All members where Finns and represented the same generation: their age varied from 24 to 28. The group consisted of two men and four women. One of the group members was still a student, studying business, and the rest five where working. Figure 16 shows the demographics of the focus group.

| Focus group member | Age | Occupation | Male/ Female |
|--------------------|-----|-------------------|--------------|
| A | 25 | Assistant | F |
| B | 27 | Clerical employee | M |
| C | 24 | Clerical employee | F |
| D | 28 | Middle Manager | M |
| E | 26 | Expert | F |
| F | 28 | Business student | F |

Figure 16. Demographics of the focus group

As the logos represented international companies and as noted, colors are culturally bound (Huovila 2006, p.45), I wanted to keep the cultural backgrounds of the study group homogenous to minimize the affect of culture in this study.

The focus group gathered in Helsinki on the 13 of November 2007. The discussion was held in Finnish to ease the opinion sharing and lasted all and all about an hour. The focus group discussion was taped and transcribed and the comments of the members were translated into English.

In the beginning of the discussion all six logos where spread on the table around where the participants sat. Focus group members where then asked to write down adjectives

and impressions that first came to their mind of the logos. This was done to get everyone's natural opinions of the logos down, before the discussion. There was a period of two minutes that was allowed to use per logo for writing down the first impressions.

The group was guided through a discussion with loosely structured questions based on Pohjola's (2003, p. 198), points how to evaluate the CVI. These questions served to initiate open-ended discussions:

- ⌚ What is your first impression of the logo?
- ⌚ With what adjectives would you describe the logo?
- ⌚ In which field you think this company operates in?

Each of the six selected logos were printed on a white paper representing only the corporate logo. The reason for doing this, representing only the logo, was to get a genuine reaction to the logo only without letting anything other visual element mix the message.

This section explained method of collecting data from the focus group. Next semiotics and its use in this research is reasoned and explained.

3.2.2 Semiotics

This section introduces semiotics and its relation to signs. Further the section justifies the use of semiotics in this study.

Semiotics is a study that looks into the relationships between signs, objects and receiver (Pohjola, 2006 p.70). Ambrose & Harris (2006, p.221) defines semiotics as a study of signs. They argue that semiotics offers an explanation about how people extract meaning from words, sounds and pictures. Noble and Bestley (2005, p. 188) define

semiotic as “the study of signs and symbols and especially the relationship between signs and their referents in the physical world”. They note that semiotics is the core strategic method by which graphic marks, text and images can be deconstructed and interpreted to determine their underlying meanings.

Two researchers, Swiss professor Ferdinand de Saussure and an American philosopher Charles Sanders Pierce, developed semiotics in the early 1900s. Both of the men were working independently, but both saw sign as the central element in the study of semiotics and they were both concentrated on models portraying the relationships between the components of the sign (Fiske 1992, p.63-67). Especially Pierce concentrated on the relationship between the components is what enables us to turn signals into a message we can understand. (Crown 2003, p.15-16)

According to Pierce’s model (from Pohjola 2003 p.73) semiotic meanings are born in action in three different the relationship between the sign and its object.

- 1) Iconic, when there is a formal similarity between the sign and object (for example a picture of a car as a corporate logo)
- 2) Index, when there is a clear natural causal relationship between sign and object (for example fire or smoke)
- 3) Symbolic, when the relationship between the sign and object is agreed

Pierce’s approach to semiotics ask two fundamental questions: the question of representation; what do images represent and how? and the question of the “hidden meanings” of images; what ideas and values do the people, places and things represented in images stand for? (van Leuwen and Jewitt, 2001, p.92).

According to Ambrose and Harris (2006, p.221) Semiotics has three classifiers: the sign, the system and the context. A sign gives us information from its content, the system it operates within (such as a road-signage scheme) and the context within which it is placed (such as near moving machinery). Many works of art and designs include

symbolic references or signs that communicate multiple layers of information. Figure 17 explains the relations between sign, object and the end user.

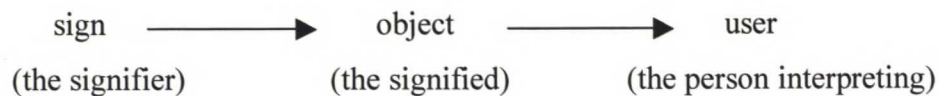


Figure 17. The relations between sign, object and end user in semiotics.

Pohjola (2006, p.70) argues that a sign is concrete substitute for things, phenomenon and concepts in community's information sharing; an image or design that visually represents an idea, item or element. Signified is an idea, item or element that is visually represented by an image or design (Ambrose and Harris, 2006 p. 226). As signs always are substitutes for something, each of the signs are presumed to have a constant relationship to the object it represents. This semiotic relationship defines the content of the sign (Pohjola, p.71). These relationships are a system where they are dependent on each other. For example in the traffic lights when the lowest light class is broken so that you cannot see its colour, you still know that you have a permit to drive, although we only see the lowest light on, and not the green colour

Norrena (2003 p. 74-75) states that semiotic analysis also helps to find out how the wanted values of a company are transformed into its communication for example of design, packaging and advertising. She has divided semiotic analysis into three levels. Next these levels and

- 1) In the orientation level find out how people react into figures, colours, forms, functions and to the organization of the space etc.

- 2) In the descriptive level analyse the moral and social values: they tell the value position of the product, social status, reference group, gender , way of living etc.
- 3) Symbolical level researches the basic value condensation. These are codes, myths and symbols that compress the whole world view of the product

Unlike methodologies that have been specifically created for business use, semiotics is an approach, a way of looking at meaning. According to Watts (2004) it is not such a defined system, which can be applied, in black and white terms to a problem. It is more an approach which activities to reveal and analyze the extent to which meanings are produced out of the structural relations that exist within any sign system, and not from the external reality they seem so naturally to depict. Semiotics can be used to help understand how the symbols and words in corporate identities are interpreted to have social relevance and meaning (Dowling, 2001, p176).

The aim of using semiotics in this study is to describe and understand how people produce and communicate meaning in specific discourses and social settings. Semiotics is used as an approach in this study to analyze meanings of signs as Watts (2004) suggested. He also notes that semiotics play a significant role in helping practitioners understand the final visual stages in the communication process.

Next section introduces the meanings of basic forms that are used in the analysis of the communication of the six selected logos.

3.2.3 Meaning of forms

This section presents the components of logos with what the selected logos are then interpreted in the chapter 4.

Signs, icons and logos are all composed of certain basic forms. These forms have underlying meanings that are inspected in this section. According to Brandt (2003, p.33)

a form is always a sign and has a meaning, just like word. A line with a cloud on top of it becomes a tree and circle of lines around it, is a sun. Sometimes the meaning is more difficult to establish and its not easy to say straightaway what the form means.

But not all logos are clearly formed of basic forms, but to analyze the messages they send they can be cut down to smaller forms so they are can be analyzed better. To better understand the meaning of logos Oelsner and Laub (2007a, p.9) broke down their structure, so that only basic forms where left. They found out that although many of the logos seemed as complex structures, all of them where formed of basic forms. The dismantling of the logos helped them to better analyse and understand how logos work. Figure 18 shows an example how six different logos can be broken down to smaller units and shows that some of logos that seem complex at first sight are build from basic forms:

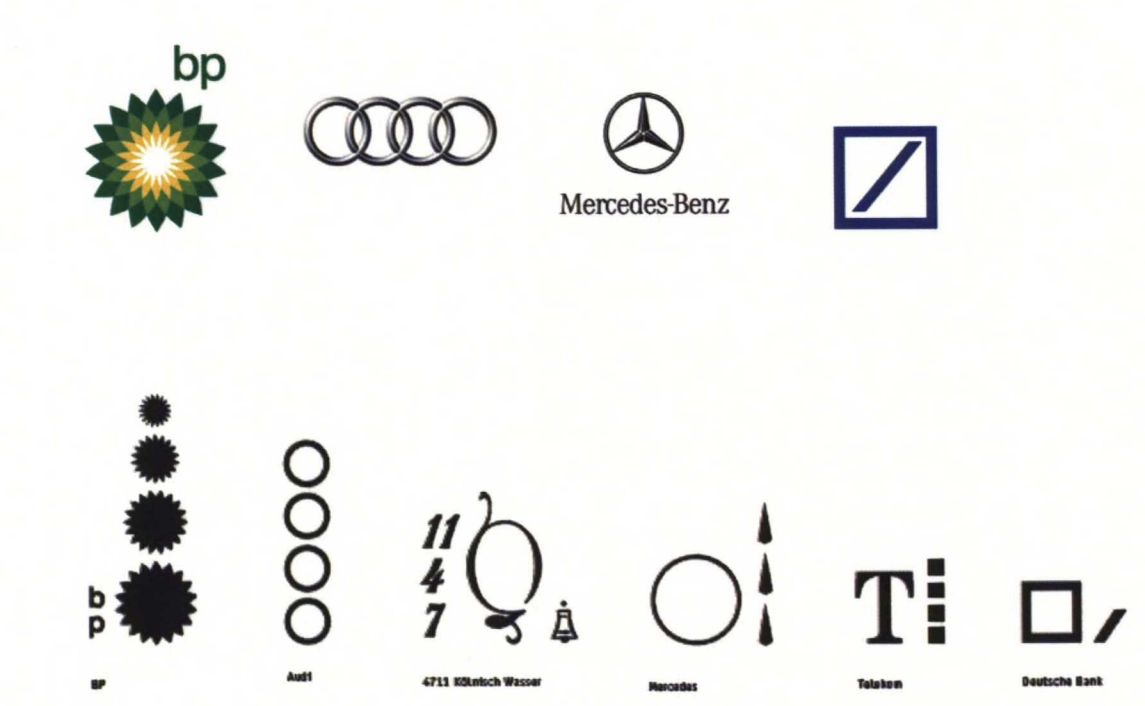


Figure 18. Logos of bp, Audi, Mercedes Benz and Deutsche bank (Oelsner and Laub 2007a)

Another way of disassemble basic forms from logos is draw a frame that is based on a basic form around the logo. Although it might not always be clear to the eye, especially in logos that seem like free forms, most of the logos are based upon a basic form (Oelsner and Laub 2007a, p.16). These forms bring general form into the background of the logos. This kind of a search of basic form is useful when studying logos that are not based on any specific form and do not really give any specific meaning directly to the company itself. Oelsner and Laub (2007a) give an example of a Lacoste logo: the crocodile has no meaning to the clothing manufacturing company as such, but the rectangle frames that can be build around it communicates stability. Figure 19 shows the logos of a Lacoste, WWF and Nestle, that at first seen like arbitrary forms drawn into a frame that communicates as much as the symbols itself.



Figure 19. Logos of Lacoste, WWF and Nestlé with frames of basic forms

Every form and colour evokes associations: emotions and meanings that are determined both by collective and personal experiences. There are still some generalizations made of what some basic forms usually mean to people (Oelsner and Laub 2007a, p.12-13)

Figure 20 shows the most common basic forms and the meaning that are generally linked with these forms. Implicit meanings of some of the basic forms are explained more thoroughly after the Figure 20.





























| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|
|  stable reliable boring |  dynamic active unsteady |  stable wide heavy |  confined light dynamic |  pointing askew unstable | |
|  active tension stretch |  dynamic danger active |  shaky direction showing arrow |  calmer active stable | | |
|  infinite reliable harmonic boring |  stable protection tunnel |  unsteady bowl boat |  divided discordant pie |  active unsteady |  stable dynamic eye |
|  active advising moving |  harmonic natural boring |  stable boring stop sign |  active agressive moving |  dynamic active david's star |  new dynamic active |
|  elegant stretched shaky |  stable reliable boring |  positive ascending stairs |  dynamic negative declining |  stable arrow stretched |  smile positive pod |

Figure 20 . Meanings of basic forms (Oelsner and Laub 2007a, p.12-13)

Olsner and Laub (2007a) explain more thoroughly what some of basic forms mean:

Square 

In the square form all the sides and corners are the same, which gives the effect of stabile, static, calm, closed, boring and hard. When the square stands on its corner, it

seems it could fall any given minute. Impact: Unstable, floating. Associations of square forms are diamonds and traffic signs.

Rectangle



Rectangle works both in vertical or horizontal posture and thus is considered more active than square. Crosswise posed rectangle is thought of as stable, secure, afloat and apathetic.

Triangle



Triangle is considered as the most active of all basic elements. One of the reasons for this is that it can show direction as arrow. Depending also on the size of its angles it may seem stretched or small and clam. Impact: active, dynamic, resemble of an arrow, hard, pointed and sharp. Possible associations for a triangle are : Mountain, pyramid, roof or warning signs.

Circle



Circle doesn't have a start or end point and is thus a symbol for continuity. Circle transmits less tension than square or triangle because it does not show any direction. Impact: calm, harmonic, closed, infinite, soft, feminine and secure.

Ellipse



Ellipse is the oval form of the circle, and is considered more dynamic than circle as it shows direction. When standing, ellipse gives an impression of strive but also wobbly. When lying down it seems more calm and composed. Impact: more dynamic than circle but undefined. Ellipses that are lying down are often associated with eyes.

Polygon



Polygons are often used only as frames of logos (especially when numbers or letters are used as logos) Hexagons are seen often as bees cell and thus is associated with more natural forms. Oxtagon reminds people of stop sign.

Star



Stars are often associated with religious or political views, but start are also used to express internationality. Stars imply also light, glow, beams, brightness, glamour, long distances. When used in a logo, stars usually have five or six apexes, and extra element to increase the motive.

Lines



Lines have a good ability to change, and thus here is given only few examples. Slant lines are always considered as rising or descending.

This section introduced the meaning of basic forms, which are later used as basis for analysing the communication of the six selected logos. Next chapter discusses the issues of validity and reliability concerning this study.

3.5. Validity and reliability

This section discusses issues of the validity and reliability concerning this study.

Messarias (2003) states that the study of visual communication is increasingly confronted with two issues concerning reliability. First, on a theoretical level, the need to understand the distinction among the major models of communication: image, word,

music, body display, etc. Also the clearer appreciation of the specific role that each of them plays in social process. Second, on the research point of view, the need of more sophisticated ways of exploring visual meanings and viewer's responses to images. These both issues are something that each researcher must carefully consider, when starting to a research visual communication. Especially, the means how to research what images mean to different people and how to measure if the visual communication has met its target, are difficult questions to answer.

Other difficulty in visual communication, as in verbal communication, is the cultural background of the communicators. Culture is something that is always present in all communicational activities, and it cannot be bypassed, when considering international business communication. Still, in this study the cultural factors are not taken into consideration due to the limitations of scope of Master's thesis. The cultural norms and backgrounds in this study are considered stabile.

Messarias (2003) raises well-argued questions concerning the validity of visual communication research. The thorniest problem of visual research is how to judge the validity of the analyst's interpretation? How do we know that researcher's claims are adequate reflections of how other viewers would respond to the same images? He also comes with answers to these questions: He states that the most straightforward way of validating and interpretation is to ask a representative group of viewers for their own responses to an image or set of images. There is substantial variation in people's capacity to provide useful information in interviews concerning visual characters. Not everyone is equally good at retrieving visual memories and associations.

Also, important is to notice that not many people are good translating their visual experiences into words for the interviewer. Still Marshall and Rossman (1999, p .115) believe that focus groups have a high apparent validity, since the idea is easy to understand, the results are believable.

This Chapter introduced the data and method used in this study. Six different logos where presented and their collection methods where introduced. Semiotics and the meanings of basic forms where explained as threes methods are used in the next chapter, in which the logos are analysed.

4 ANALYSIS: WHAT LOGOS COMMUNICATE?

This research was based on two questions about the communication of corporate logos and with help of these questions the communicational abilities of corporate logos were studied. The first research question examined the visual elements of CVI and logo that communicate organization's identity. These elements were presented in chapter 2. The second research question asked how well logos represent the identity of an organization?

This chapter uses the methodology and previous literature presented in chapters 2 and 3 for analysing the communicational means of the logos.

4.1 Analysis of the logos

This section analyses the six logos based on the methodology and data presented. The analysis is based on semiotics and it also uses the meanings of basic forms and colours as a method for analysis.

To be able to answer both of the two research questions qualitative methods such as semiotic analysis and deconstruction of design artefacts were used to the six selected corporate logos. According to Noble and Bestley (2005, p.67) using these methods in practice means reading of explicit and implicit messages within a visual form to determine the range of meanings which might communicate to audience. They continue that the analysis is then based on subjective response to visual forms and the reading of the graphic material by viewer.

The analysis for this study was made based on Rose's (2001) questions for evaluating signs and images using semiotic way of thinking. The questions used are:

- What is being shown?
- What are the components of the image?
- What use is made of color?
- What do the different components of an image signify?

Also the three semiotic levels: orientation, descriptive and symbolic that Norrena (2003) introduced are used as a base for the analysis. The logos are analyzed on the same order as they are presented in previous chapter.

4.1.1 HKScan


 The logo for HKScan, featuring the company name in a bold, sans-serif font. The letters 'H', 'K', and 'S' are in a dark brown color, while 'c', 'a', and 'n' are in a lighter, golden-brown color.

The logo of HKScan shows only the name of the company and it is build upon the name, colors and specific typography. This means that the communicational visual elements in HKScan logo are the colour and typographical forms of the letters.

When using only the name of company as a logo helps the recall of the logo when the company is familiar to the audience but may hinder the recognition of the company and its identity when the company is unknown to its audience. For audience it may be harder to read the visual communication that is based only colour and typography.

Because there is no specific signs or marks in HKScan logo that could be analysed, I looked for the underlying forms and built a frame around the logo, as Oelsner and Laub (2007a) suggested. The most natural form that was found by using the frame around the logo was a rectangle. As a form rectangle represents stability but is still an active form.



The colour brown that is used in the logo both in light and darker form communicates solidarity, boldness and good mood (Huovila 2006). The typographical forms of the letters in the logo are angular but still soft and round.

The use of two different colours and somewhat different style in the typography in the beginning and the end of the logo also expose the history of the company: it is a merge between two separate companies. Also the form of the letter S reminds of a delicious odour of the food the company produces.

4.1.2 Heijmans



The logo of Heijmans , is also based on the name of the company and is formed of the company name, colors and the form of the frame around the logo mark. This again gives great impact on the color and typography as well as the basic form that forms the frame of the logo.

The colors in Heijmans logo communicate the following: The company presents future and ambition (yellow main color) but it is still credible and calm (the name written in blue). The red detail suggests that the company is exiting and active. (Huovila 2006). This communicates the fact that the company itself is a stabile company in a very active and ambitious surroundings or market segment. Especially the rectangle form of the logo and frame the communicates of stability.



The form and yellow color in the Heijmans logo create contradiction: the effect of the yellow active and attractive color is diminished by the stable rectangle.

The typography speaks of solid and heavy language.

4.1.3 Consumer Society and Citizen Network



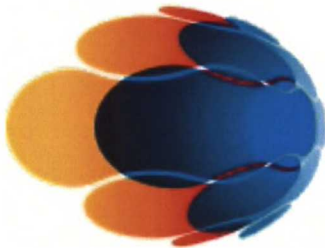
The logo of Consumer Society and Citizen Network represents symbolic logos that base their communication to symbolic signs and forms. It is created of vertical lines, which create a illusion of an umbrella under them.

This logo is formed of different sized vertical lines that mirror or symbolize bar codes and umbrella symbolizing protection from something. The shade part of the umbrella is invisible, showing only the handle and the edges. Although the umbrella is highly distinct from the logo, the absence of the shade communicates invisible protection and leaves it somehow to the imagination of the viewer.



The black color used in the logo communicates authority, power and modernity (Huovila 2006). The two basic forms that can be drawn from the logo are square and descending arc. A frame drawn around the logo forms a square, communicating a company that is stable, static, calm, closed, boring and hard. Descending arc communicates stability. (Oelsner and Laub 2007a)

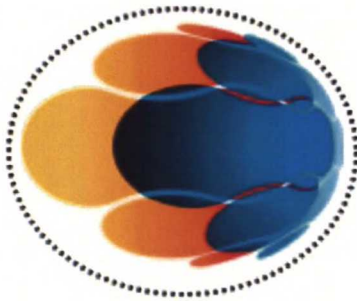
4.1.4 Sociedade de Desenvolvimento do Norte da Madeira



The logo of Sociedade de Desenvolvimento do Norte da Madeira represents a symbolic sign. Its communicational means are based on the symbolism of the signs and the colors of the logo.

The cold blue and warm yellow and orange create a nice contrast. Blue communicates calmness, orderliness, loyalty and pride, where orange expresses security, sociality and

comfort (Huovila 2006). The basic forms of the logo circle and ellipse communicate stability and infinity (Oelsner and Laub 2007a).



The round forms of the logo give an impression of a globe: the cold cover and the hot volcanic content. The lines above the cover remind of the airflows on the globe. The opposite colors that collide and the flows give an impression of flow and progress

4.1.5 Verek



The fifth logo is a combination of a name of the company and a symbol, which eases the recognition whether the company is unknown or familiar to the viewer: The name tells directly about the company and the symbol hints about the attributes of the company.

The symbol of the logo is built from small cycles that form a star. The lay-out of the circles gives an impression of movement towards or backwards as the sizes of the circles decrease when going further back of the symbol. Star as a symbol communicates active, aggressive and moving attributes (Oeslner & Laub 2007a).

The logo is formed around a stabile, reliable and boring form of a square and the black colour gives the impression of authority, power and modernity (Huovila 2006).

4.5.6 Ambion



The sixth logo is combination of name, symbol and slogan. Although this logo gives most information about itself to its audience, it somehow creates a mixed message. It feels, as the name and symbol of the logo are not enough to communicate the identity of the company, but it still need a slogan to tell what it does.

The symbol of the logo is a square or an ellipse standing on its one point. This gives boring but still bit unsteady image (Oelsner & Laub 2007a). Also the color combination of aqua blue and black implies authority and power, combined with calm and order. (Huovila 2006).



The basic form of the frame was hard to find from the sixth logo, as the pictures above show. The closest fit of the forms was rectangle; representing stability.

This section analyzed the six logos selected for this study based on semiotic thinking, the meaning of basic forms and the meaning of basic colors. Each logo was described based on the communicational messages they send and the symbolic meaning of different components.

HKScan presented itself base on the message that its logo sent as a stabile but still active company that promotes solidarity in its operations. Heijamans logo communicated of a active and amities company that is still stabile in its operations. The logo of Consumer Society and Citizen Network communicated of a stabile organization with authority. The logo of Sociedade de Desenvolvimento gave an impression of a social and calm organization that looks and moves towards future. Verek's logo presented the company as Active, modern and aggressive. Ambion's logo communicated of stabile and calm company.

Next section introduces focus group members' opinions of the selected logos.

4.2 Results of the Focus group discussion

The opinions of logos from the focus group members were selected first in written form, so that each member answered to the three following questions by writing short comments down to paper.

What is your first impression?

What things come to your mind of these logos?

With what adjectives would you describe these logos?

The first impression for the HKScan logo

- Boring, not so interesting colors, conservative
- Sausage (comes from the word HK), reminds logo of a hotel, traditional, expensive looking
- Simple, futuristic font, unusual color
- Chocolate, coffee, oriental, 70's style
- Boring, proper and business-like, softness, could be a logo of a coffee shop because of the font
- Simple, doesn't communicate much about the company or its products

The first impression for the Heijmans logo

- ⌚ Can't read the name of the company, the red line is nice detail, a bit confusing, the colors are controversial
- ⌚ Technology, industrial
- ⌚ Interesting font, boring, could imagine in the side of a hockey ring
- ⌚ Icelandic, unclear
- ⌚ Nordic (because of the colors) and traditional
- ⌚ Unclear -the name is hard to read, simple

The first impression for Consumer Society and Citizen Network logo

- Playful, funny, raises opinions,
- Masculine, boring, looks forced
- Funny, impressive, easy to recognize once you know the company behind it, "protects from the rain"
- Funny, a bit old-fashioned, doesn't tell about the field of business
- Reminds of the bar codes at the stores, lack of creativity
- Creative idea, makes one wonder what it is about, unusual combination of umbrella and bar codes

The first impression for Sociedade de Desenvolvimento logo

- Messy, unclear, colorful, soft, remind of flower
- Vivacious, international, large corporation
- Ink stain, colorful, flames or flower
- Unfinished, preprint alike, goes to "wrong" direction, a meteorite
- Unclear, upside down
- Reminds of flower, colorful, no hint to the company, unclear

The first impression for Verek logo

- ⌚ Hard, reminds of IT field, black hole
- ⌚ Trendy, city alike, creative, reminds of advertising agency
- ⌚ Fake design alike, reminds the logo of Finnish clothing company Nanso
- ⌚ Technical, could be a logo of a technical company, basic, doesn't raise much of opinions
- ⌚ Modern
- ⌚ Simple, stylish, formal

The first impression for Ambion logo

- ⌚ Does not raise any opinions, unimaginative, serious, conservative
- ⌚ Cold and clinical, official, clear
- ⌚ Unclear, reminds of a pharmaceutical company
- ⌚ Pharmaceutical alike, something related to water
- ⌚ Does not raise any feelings
- ⌚ Boring picture and text, does not seem like a compact package,

After the members had written down their first impressions of the six logos the discussion started. Before this I asked if any of the logos or companies were familiar to the participants; only one person knew the HKScan as a logo, other logos were unfamiliar to all.

The discussion was build upon three questions

- What feelings rose from this logo?
- How would you describe the company?
- What type of company and from what field could use these logos as its symbol?

HKScan

The first reactions of the logo concerned the colour and the typeface: the choice of colours and typeface was doubted. Especially the colour choice was thought bad and somehow unpleasant. All together the colours reminded the focus group members of coffee and chocolate.

“This reminds me of logo of a coffee house due to the brown colours.”

Next, the focus turned into the name of the company and its connection to sausages:

“I like the typeface but the colours don’t remind me a food company ”

(This member knew the company)

Adjectives that the focus group member described the company where:

Boring, exclusive, stiff and old-fashioned even.

” I don’t consider it modern at all.

The colours remind me of 80’s or 70’s”

*“Somehow is communicates to me a type of exclusivity,
but in a weird way...”*

*”I think this is professional logo, because of the stiffness. It seems like this
company doesn’t need to represent itself strongly through its logo or
create quick associations.”*

The field of business of the corporation was not clear to the members, as the logo was thought to represent a Hotel, Coffee house, Restaurant or a printing company.

“This represents a printing company, because of the Scan.”

Heijmans

The first what all members noted of the Heijmans logo was the difficulty of read the whole name. The beginning of the name was considered to be clear but the end was too unclear.

”I can’t read the name, especially the end of it, well.”

Next the colours of the logo were discussed. All agreed that the blue and yellow used in the logo reminded of Sweden and its colours.

"This could be Norwegian and Swedish company...or at least Scandinavian. The colours seem so Scandinavia colours."

Also the small details as the red line where noted and its meaning was discussed at the same time as the possible field of business was thought off. Most of the member agreed that the company operates in the field of heavy industry. This association was made due to the heavy typeface and the use of colours.

"This could be a logo of a tanker company, I think the logo somehow suits well into the side of a huge ship or airplane."

"I agree...the red thing could represent a container!"

"I think this definably represents an heavy industrial firm."

Consumer Society and Citizen Network

The first opinions of this logo concentrated on how it was liked or disliked. Others though it was nice and funny and the others though it was ugly. Other adjectives that it raised were masculine and clear. Also the use of symbols made the logo feel somewhat educational. The focus group members also identified directly the bar code and umbrella from the logo.

"The symbols are used extremely interesting way"

The field of business where the organization operated had couple of guesses.

"This could well represent an organization that works in the field of bar codes...or something related to that."

"It could be a logo of old fashioned men's tailor. Somehow the umbrella in it tells me that..."

"For me this looks like a logo of some sort of artistic advertising or design agency, due to its visual language."

All and all this logo raised most opinions and feelings and it was discussed longest. Due to the symbol in the logo, this created the most reaction. Each member seemed to have various opinions. Also the absence of a company or organization name disturbed some members. Still it was thought of a strong symbol for a organization.

"I feel this is a good logo that communicates well the company it represents. If I would know the organization I would definitely recognise this one later as well."

Sociedade de Desenvolvimento do Norte da Madeira

At first the members noted the symbol and the colours of the logo. The most common opinion was that the symbol looked like a flower or an asteroid. Some members saw movement through the use of colours.

"It looks like a flower, a magnolia maybe..."

"...is it some type of a tale of a fireball?"

"Nice colourful logo with good forms. It looks like its moving onward."

The direction of the logo was unclear: some members saw it transforming from cold to warm and others another way around.

"Which way you should look at it? Is it collapsed?"

The field of business of the organization was not clear either. A pharmaceutical company or technological firm were thought of.

"This logo could represent a joint venture or corporation where to different companies have merged"

"This reminds me somehow of transformation of knowledge. Could be because of the movement and the fact that it looks like the logo of British Telecom."

Verek

First what the focus group member noted was the form of the logo. It was told to remind for most of the members a Nordic company as it was said to have the same visual language as Finnish companies Nanso and Artek. The design language was thought of being formal.

"This looks like Artek has merged together with the post."

This logo was considered good, as it had the name of the company and a symbol that represented the company.

The field of business where the company operated were design, technology or decoration shop. Half of the members considered the company to be Design Company and half thought it would be a technical company. The visual language was thought of being hard and cold.

"The simplicity of the logo reminds design...so it could have something to do with design"

"Oh, this is very hard logo. It has straight corners and the typography is very hard as well. This cannot represent any company that promotes soft values."

Ambion

This logo did not arouse much of any feelings or opinions. And as a whole it was considered as a cold and clinical logo. All and all the logo was thought of being official and cold. Also the round soft form of the symbol and hard typeface created a confused the group members.

The symbol reminded of a pill, which for some communicated a pharmaceutical company. Other, what the symbol reminded for some members was a raindrop, and thus the company was connected to water.

"This company operates in the field of biotechnology. The symbol in the logo somehow implies of that..."

"Its a sports company"

Also discussion of the compatibility of the typeface and the symbol was held: the common opinion was that they did not seem to belong together as the visual language of both of them was so different. They looked like to separate things and they were no harmony between them.

This chapter analysed the selected logos using the meanings of the visual forms and colours and semiotic thinking as methods. The results of the focus group discussion and opinions were also introduced. Next Chapter summarizes the research and introduces the main findings of the research.

5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the conclusions to the current study. It provides a research summary and offers the main findings. The chapter also makes suggestions for further research.

5.1 Research summary

This section answers the research questions and explains how the theoretical frameworks presented in chapter 2 and 3 were used.

The aim of this study was to study the communicational means of organizational logos. The study was conducted with randomly selected international organizational logos; evaluating the elements they used to convey the organization's identity. The study was conducted by the lack of research in the field of corporate visual communication and towards pure interest on visual communication. The research questions studied were:

1) What visual elements of corporate visual identity and logo communicate the identity of an organization?

The objective of the first question was to expand the understanding of corporate visual identity (CVI) and the elements it consists of. Logo was identified as one of these elements. Other where: colour, typography, name and slogan. These concepts were examined and explained in literature review on the Chapter 2. Chapter 2 also identified the communicational element of logo, which were used as the basis for a analysis further in the study.

2) How well logo communicates the identity of an organization?

The second research question was inspected with two methodologies presented in the Chapter 3: focus group and analyse of the means of basic forms and colour. Semiotics, introduced and explained in the Chapter 3 was used as an approach in this study. Semiotics was mainly used as a way of thinking when analyzes meanings of logos.

The visual elements introduced in the Chapter 2 where used as a basis for the analysis. The mean of communication of theses elements in the selected six logos was then analysed in the Chapter 4. To find out what people actually saw in the logos, a focus group was formed, and their opinions on the studied logos where asked to find out if the visual elements of these logos actually communicate the identities of the organizations. The written answers and discussion was introduced in the Chapter 4.

The next section explains and discusses the main findings of the analysis of the communicational means of the selected logos and focus group discussion.

5.2 Main findings

This section explains the main findings, indications and the limitations of this study.

This study aimed to explain the different elements that organizations use when communicating their identity visually.

The main findings of the study show that there visual elements, especially corporate logo, does communicate the organization's identity to stakeholders. The extent and how well the logo communicates about the identity of the organization, depends on the type of the logo. This study indicated that the logos that best communicate the wanted identity of organization are word logo and iconic logos.

The focus group members identified the field of business and attributes of the organizations best from logos of HKScan, Heijmans, CSCN and Sociedade de

Desenvolvimento do Norte da Madeira. The logo of the HKScan was identified as a logo of a food company, although there were doubts of which food it was. Also Heijmans was categorized correctly as a heavy industrial company. The logo of CSNC communicated educational and sheltering organization and Sociedade de Desenvolvimento do Norte da Madeira was said to transform knowledge. The combination marks of Vereck and Ambion were logos that didn't transform the wanted message of identity to the focus group members.

The reason for these differences in the success of the communication of the logos, could be in the amount of visual elements that are used in the logo: both Vereck and Ambion logos included name, typography, colour, symbol and Ambion even a slogan. The amount of different elements can easily create a confusion in the message it sends, when stakeholders try to read all the visual elements. Also in the great amount of element lays bigger danger that the elements communicate opposite attributes about the company.

The results seem to indicate that logos that relay on more simple forms and symbols and use less visual elements to communicate the organizational identity have better changes to be understood by stakeholders of the organization.

The findings of the study support the argument of Huovila (2006, p.26-27) that, when using the grammar of signs as help, a logo can best describes/ communicates the wanted message, which was in this study the identity of an organization.

Furthermore the findings also confirm the aims of logos (Huovila 2006, p.12-13)

- To support the sent message (its classification, importance or content)
- To give identity to the message sender
- Awake and keep the interest of the receiver about the given information

5.3 Validity and reliability

This section discusses the trustworthiness of this study and explains the limitations of the study. According to Bryman & Bell (2003, p.288-289) trustworthiness can be used as a similar measure in qualitative study as validity and reliability in used in quantitative studies. The validity of data collection method was discussed in the chapter 3.

Bryman and Bell (2003, p. 35) suggest evaluating the following four measures to present the trustworthiness of qualitative research:

- *Credibility*

Which answer to the question: how believable the findings are?

- *Transferability*

Which answers to the question: do the findings ably in some other context?

- *Dependability,*

Which answers o the question: are complete record of the research kept?

- *Confirmability,*

Which answers to the question: has the researcher let his/her own values to intrude the study?

The credibility of the study implies that the research is carried out using the best practices of field. This study used the same methods for analyse that are used supported by other researched in the field of visual communication. Hence, the theoretical framework followed the same routes as in previous studies. The transferability of the study is indicate with the fact that it is in line with previous studies concerning corporate visual communication and thus the study findings can be referred to in other contexts.

Dependability issues of this study are covered with recording the focus group discussion and the notes of the focus group members where also collected. Conformability refers to the fact that the researcher has not allowed her own values to affect the study. To diminish the effect of own values the analysis of the logos was based purely on previous studies. The selected logos were also collected so, that researcher had scant or no previous experience with the organization .

This study ignored the fact of culture, which may affect to the opinions of the focus group members and their opinions of the logos. The study also ignored the possible variations of opinions based on the cultural norms and assumed that all focus group members possessed the same cultural backgrounds.

5.4 Suggestion for further research

This section introduces suggestions for further research. There are vast opportunities to continue this study or to explore the different aspects of visual communication in the corporate settings. Three possible studies are explained next.

First, as this research concentrated mainly on one visual element of corporate visual identity (CVI), it could be interesting to study how the four other elements of CVI (colour, typography, name and slogan) communicate the identity of the corporation. Especially study of the communicational means of corporate name in international business environment would create an attractive research topic.

Second, the affect of culture in visual corporate communications, which this study did not take into consideration, deserves more research. For example Mantua (2007) has done research on the cultural colour conventions in the business settings, which implies to the need and interest of research in the area of visual communication in the international business communication.

Third further research could concentrate on how the strategic changes in the corporation are reflected on the visual identity of the corporation. As it was noted, that corporate visual identity should, and does, reflect the identity of an organization the changes in the identity would then communicate of changes inside the corporation.

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